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Nos delubra Deûm ——————
—— *festâ velamus fronde per urbem.*

VIRG.

With votive leaves our willing hands adorn,
The sacred temples on the coming morn.

ANON.

Tomorrow's sun, in the flight of time, rises upon that day, each return of which awakes in the heart the flame of kindling devotion, and the hilarity of festive pleasure. At every successive approach of those seasons, which established custom has consecrated in the affections of man,—

[illegible], such domestic [illegible],

we know not from what cause, the energies of the body and the mind, as if gifted with an impulse from above, seem to rise with ethereal elasticity in all the duties of life. At such a period as this, the renewal of our early associations, the recollection of former enjoyments, and the mixture of a thousand varied emotions, convey in themselves a charm to the soul which no words can exactly define: and while the wintry storm is raging through Nature's external scenes, the fire-side of domestic felicity receives new lustre from the lively smile, and the social mirth, which mark the time for rejoicing at hand, and bid the reign of pleasure to begin.

Whatever may be the language of contemptuous ridicule, which some of the rigid sectarians of the present day may be disposed to cast upon the cel-

-bration of those festal seasons, one of which is now proclaiming its advent, we can by no means join in a belief which violates the general feelings of the age in which we live, and rises in opposition to those deep-rooted attachments which the revolution of centuries has never been able to subvert. And, in the midst of the common joy, we must confess that we are not so hardened by bigotry, or so blinded by prejudice, as to place ourselves in deliberate hostility to the sentiments of the universal world, in defiance of the convictions of our consciences within, and the remonstrances of custom without.

In the remoter periods of the world, - under whatever form of Pagan idolatry, or heathenish darkness, the nations conducted the concerns of their

-bers, such American processions,

political administration, nature seems to have conferred upon them all the desire of distinguishing some particular times with peculiar pleasures, and superior enjoyments. At the periodical recurrence of these delightful seasons, the strong and the aged, the high and the low; the vivacity of youth, and the vigor of manhood; every rank and condition, sex and denomination; contributing their separate portions to the mass of general rejoicing, relaxed for a period their bodies from the duties of necessary labor, or their minds from the fatigue of diligent exertion. The toiling dependant, amid the severer occupations of humble life, amused the solitary hours of drudgery and employment, by the expectation of those happy

days, at whose arrival even his cares would find a temporary alleviation, in the sports of convivial mirth, and the shouts of rapturous acclamation.

Policy seems to have lent her hand, in a considerable degree, towards the maintenance of these fixed and settled periods of recreation and enjoyment. Every tie which binds the affections of man to his native fields, and paternal home, is a link in the chain of national strength: and he whose sweetest pleasures have been derived from the land of his nativity, will be little inclined to alter the seat of his abode, for shores warmed by another sun: or, if he be tempted to wander, all that he sees, and feels, and hears, will but endear to his recollections the ties, such American associations,

scenes of his earliest delights. The remembrance of the particularities of time and place — of the celebrations of every revolving season in its turn — and of all the endless varieties of circumstance and situation, which these festivals are calculated to produce, — form the clue by which the thoughts are guided backward to the clime we have left, when straying in the maze labyrinths of foreign adventure.

But the savage tribes have always professed, and they continue to profess, their times and seasons of rejoicing among themselves, and of praise to the Deities under whose auspices they have lived. Assembled in collected throng at the allotted ground, they danced with mutual acclamations round the consecrated altars of their Gods: sung with up

lifted voices their anthems of reverential devotion, and tuned their mitic lyres in the hallowed recesses of the groves. These were the rites which they began in the cradle to love, and could only be forced to relinquish in the grave: these were the institutions which cemented them in the bond of inseparable union, and were entwined like silken cords round every fibre of their hearts.

But, although from nature and habit, the commemoration of festival seasons seems as it were a part of our existence at the present time; and tho' its origin and commencement are coëval with the earliest periods to which our knowledge extends; yet, defying its firm position in the heart of man, and laughing

at the attachments which its antiquity claims; the narrow bigots in the modern world, cramped by the rigid rules of inflexible sectarianism, cast off allegiance to a custom which ages have honored with their sanction. Some part of the spleen of these furious advocates of truth, might, we should think, be removed, if they would trouble themselves to consider, that the day whose arrival is now at hand, is not, like the festivals of the ancient idolater, stained by the pollution of unworthy praise, or shrouded in the darkness of an inexplicable worship. We throw no useless offerings at the shrine of a divinity whose attributes we cannot

resolve: ours are the sacrifices whose legality the page of revelation enjoins, and the voice of reason approves; they are neither contaminated by blood, nor degraded by superstition; they are the contributions of enlightened heads, and the effusions of understanding hearts.

It is contended, however, that those who maintain the utility of observing appointed festivals, and, amongst them, of course, that which tomorrow we expect to celebrate, do not in reality feel that superior pleasure, which their professions would lead us to believe: thus when arguments fail in denying the propriety of the observance, the deficiency is obviated by doubting the sincerity of the subjects. But we plead, that they whose principles are sufficiently strong

ters, such American procedure,

to enforce upon their consciences the necessity of these periodical distinctions, are, at the proper times, imbued with those sacred feelings, which the solemnity of the occasions inspires. And we would moreover remark, that it is the last effort of disappointed malignity, to ply the pen of ridicule, when logic cannot avail.

Without any prejudices, therefore, for one or the other order, by whatever name it may be called, we hail the day which the revolution of a few hours will usher into existence: and conformably to the feelings which influence our hearts, we wish to all and each of our indulgent readers a Christmas rich in flowing wine, and crowned with social pleasures. However the sterner votaries of a nar-

row belief may frown on the innocent recreations of the scene, we must confess, that there is something in the smile that lights up every countenance, — the tone of satisfaction, and the glow of feeling, — which throws a golden enchantment over the desolation of Nature. The very shrubs that adorn the walls of the sanctuary, and the dwelling of the citizen, are as it were the heralds that invite man to quit for a season the labors of life, and join in the mingled pleasures of the feast. Devotion carries on her front no gloomy terrors that that awe into sullen silence, and painful austerity: the submission she requires, and the tribute she commands, are both consistent with those harmless indulgences, with which

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heaven sweetens the bitter cup of human afflictions. We are not yet old enough to turn with disgust from the fascinating trifles with which existence is filled: and we therefore approve and shall manifest our approbation by sharing, all that the approaching holiday is able to bestow.

Q.